

An Analysis of Effects and Affects for Learners in the college of the World Englishes at Chukyo University

Masanori Kurumizawa

ABSTRACT: The purpose of this paper is to inspect the curriculum of the College of World Englishes (C.W.E.) at Chukyo University in Nagoya Japan. This college is the first university program to focus exclusively on the teaching of world Englishes (W.E.). I research the result of the program in terms of effects and affects for students. This paper examines and analyzes the curriculum of C.W.E. by three methods; checking the information of the syllabi, surveying department students and interviewing class coordinators. Conclusions show the program makes W.E. root in students' awareness not directly but indirectly or collaterally. Also, additional education about intelligibility and flexibility (but these definitions are still vague) is needed. Furthermore, the paper prompts students to reinforce W.E. and to recognize that their goal is to establish their educated English: Japanese English.

Introduction

The department and college of World Englishes at Chukyo University was founded in 2002 as the first department which has the name of W.E. in the world. In this department, not only just language skills such as listening, speaking, writing, speaking and cross-culture communicating are taught, but also the skills which are based on the ideas of W.E. such as understanding and recognizing English varieties and raising one's own international intelligibility and flexibility for cross-culture communication etc, are taught.

Honna and Takeshita (1998) state that "Despite the global spread of English as a language for wider communication, many Japanese still believe that English is the property of the U.S.A and Britain. They are ashamed if they do not speak English the way native speakers do. Behavioral acculturation also is presupposed as must" (p118-119).

This statement is exactly right. In Japan, junior and senior high school students learn English against the background of English learning or education which is set to British English and American English as a language model or target. Therefore it is no exaggeration to say that students think it is better to learn English from Native speakers

(Yoshikawa, 2004).

Students prefer Native-speaking English and have a negative image for non-native speaking English. That is to say, The Inner Circle variety of the three circles of English (Kachru), students prefer. This attitude is one result of text books which are used in Japanese junior and senior high school. The situation or characters are from Inner Circle countries in text books (Matsuda,2002)

Especially, students tend to connect English with American English or their cultures. Students try to learn not only a language model, but also the way of speaking, gestures etc... and they think kindly of American class style-active type class- than lecture type class-passive type class.

This paper will research if the curriculum (program) of the C.W.E. will be effective to change the students' awareness which is mentioned above.

It is the fifth year and a historical year as the college launched its first graduates in 2006. Therefore, it is an appropriate year to look at the program at the college over again. Of course, there have already been many professors, assistant and visiting professors who have published their research for courses in the Journal of the College of World Englishes year by year. However, this study is a-kin to a study by Yoshikawa (2004) because it considers the tendency and the shift of students' awareness in the department. I also believe that I might analyze data with the different point of view which is as a one of the first graduates and also viewpoints of students from professors.

Method

First, I chose three foundation courses which are featured courses of the C.W.E. Then I investigated them in three ways.

- I . Check the information of syllabus with five criteria I determined.
- II . Survey students and analyze their change of awareness for W.E. through each course.
- III . Interview each coordinator about the classes.

【Syllabus】

The Syllabus is one of the lodestars of each course. While, it is necessary for students to know the purpose or outline of the course before they take it. I aimed at its intention and examined how much the contents in the syllabus mention W.E. Then I developed five criteria which is to judge the reflection of the idea of W.E in each course. Following are the five items:

- I . Is there any mention about "world Englishes" words or English varieties in the syllabi?

- II. Does the course contain world Englishes material or not? Ex.) textbook, CD, rhetorical structures of writing
- III. Does the course appear to stress only English language skills or not
- IV. Is the course taught by outer/expanding circle teachers?
- V. Does the course provide the opportunity to improve intelligibility?

【Survey】

The questionnaire had 100 questions with 15 to 18 for each area. However, in my study, I only use the part of the survey related my topic. Students could choose five answers; *very much, a little, do not know, not so much* and *not at all*. Besides it's divided into three areas: students' awareness for W.E and class contents, teachers and satisfaction.

I took surveys of students; freshman to senior and I collected 294 students' surveys. That is approximately 80% of the student population. In this paper, I will show five representative questions.

【Interview】

I interviewed each faculty coordinator about the syllabus and questions include the results which were determined by my course analysis. The interview was for asking and understanding the forces of what is written in the syllabus. It is also for clarifying course purposes, the present states in each course, improvements etc...

Syllabi Analysis

I investigated into three foundation courses.

I. Oral Communication (OC)

The aim of this class is to activate and improve students' speaking and listening ability. The aim of the first year is to encourage them to use the language for genuine communication. The final aim is to further develop their oral and aural English language skills in order to become, confident and independent communicators.

II. Communicative Writing (CW)

The primary purpose of this class is for students to learn the write short, well-structured paragraphs or essays in coherent English rhetorical styles. Additionally, this class contents will be effective and connected to writing a graduation thesis in the fourth year.

III. Workshop (WS)

The purpose of the WS program is to give students a chance to study with a teacher in a

particular 'content' area. This content-based study is designed to simulate the university classroom environment of an international university setting such as one might encounter on the ISEP program. Students will be encouraged to express themselves, think deeply, and learn to participate in class discussions.

Q1) "WE" words and English Variety is mentioned in syllabi

OC	CW	WS
×	×	×

As above chart shows, there is no mention about "WE" words or English Variety in formation in OC, CW and WS.

Q2) Course contains WE material. Ex) textbook, CD, Structure of writing

OC	CW	WS
○	×	×

About Q2, it says WE material such as textbook, CD or Structure of writing is only contained in OC classes.

Q3) Course appear to stress only English language skills

OC	CW	WS
○	○	○

Q3 shows that the courses; OC, CW and WS appear to stress these skills.

Q4) courses taught by outer/expanding circle teachers

OC	CW	WS
×	○	○

Q4 declares that each course is taught by outer/expanding circle teachers other than OC.

Q5) course provides the opportunity to improve intelligibility

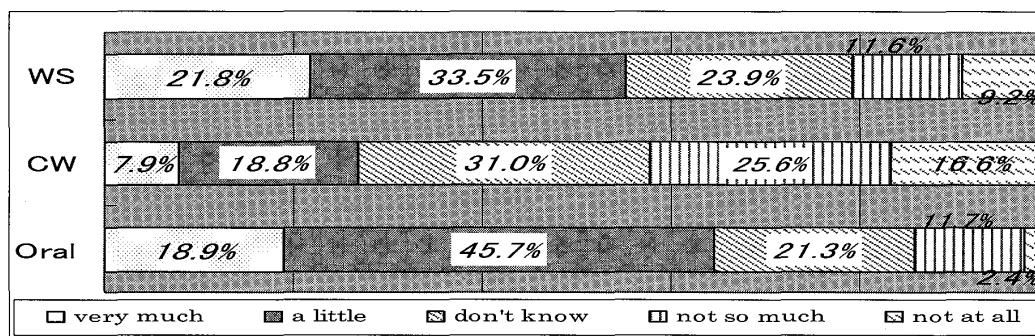
OC	CW	WS
○	×	○

Q5 Both OC and WS deal with improving intelligibility but not CW.

【Survey】

In this part, I will explain 3 representative questions (data) of survey.

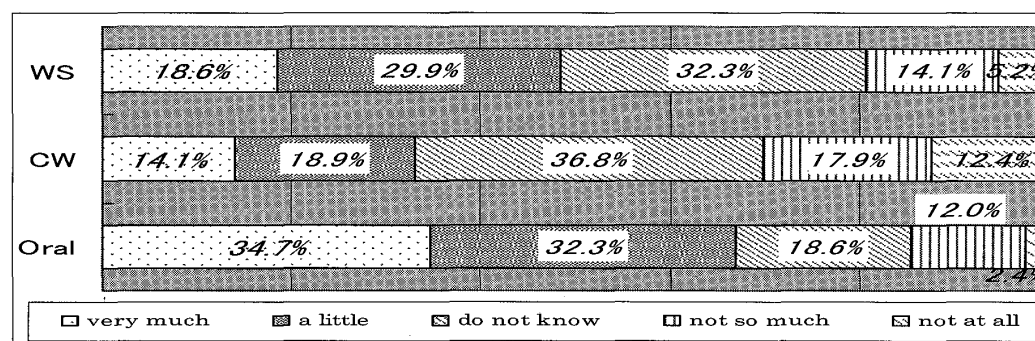
【Data 1】 Change of students' awareness of W.E as a result of courses. (*chart 1)



This chart shows almost the same tendency between OC and WS. About the answer; *very much*, OC shows 18.9% and WS 21.8%. About the answer; *a little*, OC shows 45.7% and WS shows 33.5%. Then both answers plus the number of change of students' awareness total over 50%. Obviously, I might be able to say that these two courses will be effective to change their awareness for W.E.

On the other hand, we might say following CW. The answer with the percentage *very much* plus *a little* is two times lower than the other courses. About 40% of students don't feel a change of their awareness. While there are 31% of students who replied *do not know*. This is a curious point.

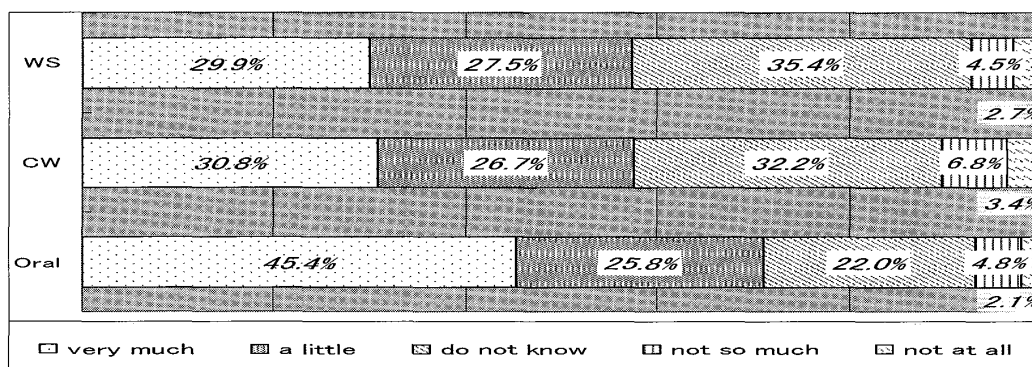
【Data 2】 Students started to have an interest of the other non-native speakers' English from each course. (*chart 2)



About OC and WS, negative answers; *not so much* plus *not at all* show less than 20%. While, CW is much higher; around 30%.

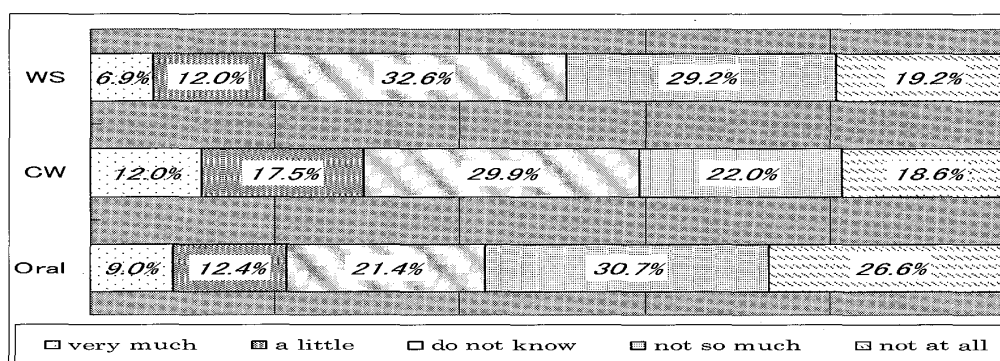
Otherwise, about affirmative answers; *very much* plus *a little*, OC is outstanding. However, CW is symmetrically low. The difference is 34%. It is a marvel that the three percentages of answers; affirmative, negative and *do not know* show nearly the same.

【Data 3】 Do you think an English as a native countries (ENL) teacher would be more effective to teach you each course. (*chart 3)



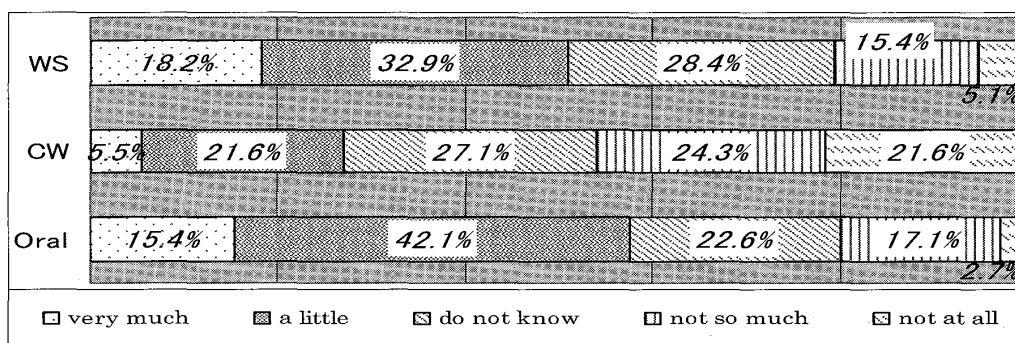
This data indicates students prefer to learn from native speakers. While each course, however, shows a positive answer of over 55%, *do not know* accounts for over 30%. I guess this might be one of their opinions which stand for doubt whether it would be really effective to learn from a native English speaker.

【Data 4】 Do you think a Japanese teacher would be more effective to teach you each course. (*chart4)



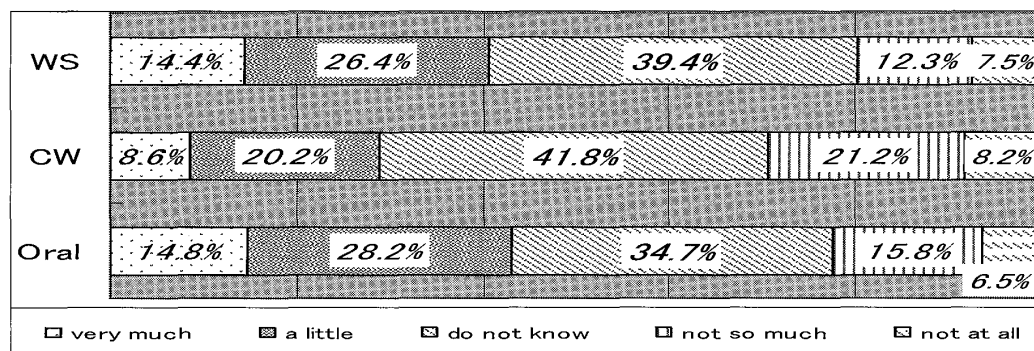
This data is contrastive to the data 3. Totally, negative answers; *not so much* and *not at all* stand out and it shows students tend to refuse to learn from Japanese teachers.

【Data 5】 Students' opinion of how much each course focuses on W.E. (*chart 5)



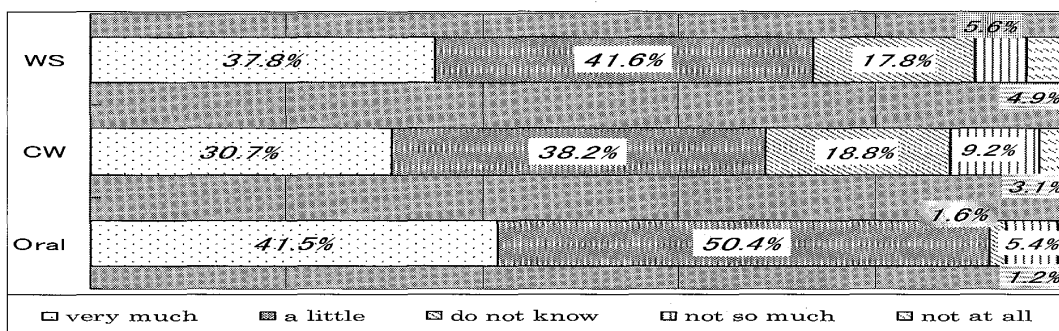
As it shows for CW, it seems that there are somewhat more students who replied *not so much* or *not at all* than students who chose *very much* or *a little*. On the other hand, OC and WS show over 50% in the answer which combines *very much* and *a little*. Then, the percentage of students who answered *do not know* is nearly the same in each course.

【Data 6】 To use W.E. in each course, promoting more teachers from non-native countries in an effective way. (*chart 6)



About this question, totally the response; *do not know* stands out. While over 40% of students think non-native countries' teachers will be effective not including CW.

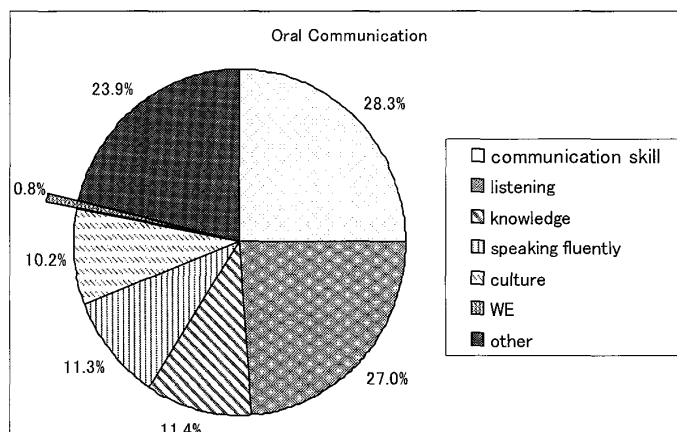
【Data 7】 Students think each course is effective for the W.E. (*chart 7)



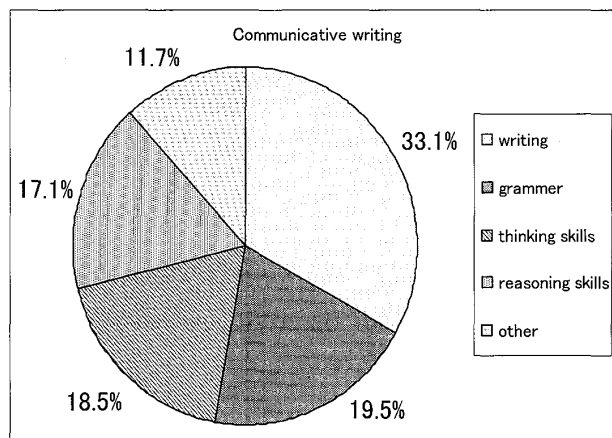
About each course, there is not a large difference between *very much* and *a little* and it can be said students feel each course is effective. This chart also shows OC is a very effective course.

【Data 8】 What students learned from taking each course. (*chart 8-10)

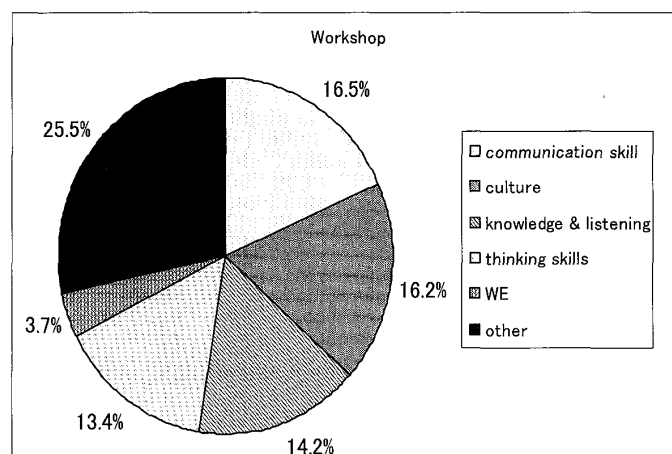
-chart8-1-



-chart8-2-



-chart8-3-



The chart of OC shows that students' awareness tends to learning English skills or not. Totally, the percentage of *communication skill*, *listening* and *speaking fluently* show 66.6%.

Writing occupies the highest percentage than the others in the chart of CW. However, it can also be said that students felt they learned other skills which are different from practical English skills, such as thinking and reasoning skills.

In the chart of WS, it can be said the same thing as CW. Through this course, students

realized they learned culture and thinking skills, in addition to English skills.

【Interview】

- OC

According to the OC coordinator, this course is not teaching W.E. It is a part of the English language studies program. The aim is to raise students' ability to use English. It means to improve basic skills. On the other hand, the coordinator thinks Japanese English will be more spread as students speak their English in conversation. He commented he is not sure to add to change the syllabi

- CW

This course's aim is to improve intelligibility. About writing organization, the coordinator said students need to consider the opposition between native style; western culture and other culture. In this class, teachers tend to accept Japanese English grammar.

- WS

This is a course to do with English. The WS coordinator said English is just tool and not a study objective of this course. About the syllabus, he expressed it is very vague and there is no fit with all teachers. Therefore all teachers hand out a more detailed paper at the first class. He is also said it is necessary to hand out syllabi every week.

Analysis

From the survey data, some important points come out.

At first, there are some paradoxes. One is in the comparison between survey data 5 and survey data 7. Students strongly answered each course is effective for the curriculum of the C.W.E. (survey data7). However it is shown their positive replies decreased at the survey data 5. At the point of positive answers; *very much* and *a little*, there are big differences between these data. OC has 34.4%, CW has 41.8% and SW has 28.3% differences. This is one problem. Especially, CW's difference stands out. However, there is a prospect which I can make.

In CW class, students continued to practice writing. This is common practice for students during the class. They might not feel W.E. or the idea of it in their work. After finishing the course work, they feel their improved writing skills. In this point, I guess they also realized their intelligibility had risen by taking CW. In their minds, they must comprehend that just writing and rewriting all the time links to improved intelligibility and it links to the idea of W.E. Therefore, the number shows that CW indeed is inevitable to the C.W.E. This idea

also applies to the other two courses, I believe. Through each course, they would recognize improved intelligibility which is one ideal of W.E. separately from feeling improvement in their language skills.

The same thing also can be said in comparison to criteria 1 with the survey data 1 and 7.

While criteria 1 shows all courses have no mention about W.E, students' responses are their awareness for W.E. changed from each course (from the survey data 1) and each course is effective for the W.E. curriculum (from the survey data 7). In this point, I guess students realize that there are W.E. itself and the idea of it in each course contents by themselves.

Then I will explain another complex below. It is about complex of students' awareness for English.

The survey data 2 shows they tend to accept non-native speakers' English. It might be caused by their understanding English varieties and the change of their awareness. On the other hand, there are conflicting results on the survey data 3. That is they still prefer native speaking English. In the data 2, OC is the most acceptable to non-native English, but in the data 3, 71.2% of students support ENL teacher. There is also a contradiction in this point. However, this is probably because of the student's background of English education. Most of their education has focused on native speaking English, their cultures etc... This is for the course of study published by Ministry of Education. This lodestar will make students' minds to connect English study and Inner circle countries' English and cultures stronger. This might be because they can't leave native speaking English. Survey data 8 is one example to show that is obviously true. On the top five answers which students chose are language abilities such as communication skills, writing skills, listening skills and so on.

It is also true that students disapprove of Japanese teachers in the survey data 4. These data also tell us that students' background of English learning in junior or high school. This result shows a reversal of students' incorrigible minds which prefer Native speaker's English.

Conclusion

This paper attempted to explore the curriculum of the C.W.E. by examining the information of syllabus, survey for students and interview for coordinators and analyzing these.

On the syllabus, there is no particular mention about W.E. and there is mention to stress only English language skills. However, it shows that courses relate to the idea of W.E. in the points of providing to treat the opportunity of intelligibility in the course or courses taught by teachers from outer or expanding circles.

From the survey data, I reconfirmed each course is effective for the C.W.E. Each course

affects students' awareness. At first, most students feel just their improved English skill or ability itself by taking each course. At this point in time, they might just think taking each course is to advance their skills. However, I guess that they would realize the proper purpose of each course in the point of time which they connect to improve the language skills and raise their intelligibility. In other words, they notice that they have learned W.E. or the ideas of W.E. The survey data 7 demonstrates this.

As I mentioned above, it can be said the result of course or the C.W.E. is to instruct students in W.E. not directly but indirectly or collaterally. This is never a negative opinion. This way is very effective and ideal in a teaching method, I think. It is a better way not to tell students particular purposes at first, than the way which tells purposes to them. When they find the purposes, they will get a sense of achievement, and it will encourage new interests to learn more about it.

While it is certain students' awareness tends to change and understand W.E., there is some resistance to non-native English. As the survey data tells, students, however, have not sloughed English and American centrism on learning W.E. yet. Of course, it is not easy to change their mind which is rooted in their background quickly. Therefore it might be necessary to show the specific aim to students at the first class for the sake of more understanding towards W.E.

The important thing is flexibility. It is good to target British or American etc, English in the case of learning English, but students should remember that their final target is their own educated English, myself included. We should try to incorporate our customs, way of thinking, culture etc., in the English we speak or write. This is one idea of W.E.

From now on, education about intelligibility is necessary. Besides it is needed to show more relationships in each course. The basic contents of each course are different, but there is a close connection between them. More development of each course will make synergism. Additionally more reviews and improvements for the curriculum will reinforce students' understanding and recognition of world Englishes.

REFERENCES

- Hino, Nobuyuki (2003) Toward a Systematization of EIL Studies for ELT in Japan. *Asian English Studies* Vol. 5, 5-43
- Honna, Nobuyuki and Takeshita, Yuko (1998) On Japan's Propensity for Native Speaker English: A Change in Sight. *Asian Englishes*, Vol. 1 No. 1. 117-137
- Matsuda, Aya (2002) "Representation of Users and Uses of English in Beginning Japanese EFL Textbooks." *JALT Journal* Vol. 24, No. 2 182-200
- Yoshikawa, Hiroshi (2004) Teaching and curriculum issue. *Journal Of College Of World Englishes*,

Vol. 6, 11-21

Yoshikawa, Hiroshi (2005) International Intelligibility in World Englishes; Focusing on Idiomatic Expressions. *Journal Of College Of World Englishes*, Vol. 7, 8, 41-48